

# Public Health: Everybody Counts!

---

## Fact Sheet

### Background

There has never been a full census of Washington state's public health workforce. We know that many of our co-workers have training that we aren't aware of, or have valuable backgrounds that are different from the roles they play in their current job. They may have professional credentials that could be helpful to the system, if we only knew about them.

In order to speak more effectively about who we are and what we do ... we need to better understand our workforce! This information is important when talking to policy makers and partners in our communities. For example, it's very difficult to explain that we need more people in a specific discipline or region if we can't say how many people with certain skills or in certain roles we have now. And for effective recruitment and retention, we need to know how long we've been in these roles, and how long we plan to stay.

### Everybody Counts! A Public Health Census

The Public Health Improvement Partnership's (PHIP) Workforce Development Committee is conducting a full census of the state and local public health governmental workforce in Washington state (about 6,000 people). The survey will give us information to better describe Washington's public health workforce in order to help us plan for succession, prevention of shortages, training, and other changes. The information gained through the census will describe, map, and track the public health workforce in order to:

- Identify and describe gaps and concerns related to workforce shortages and planning for future public health vacancies, especially around recruitment, selection, and job satisfaction.
- Review the work we do, across all job categories, with implications for training, educational preparation, recruitment, and retention planning.
- Document the diversity of our workforce and our special skills and abilities.

The survey will take place from Nov. 12 – Dec. 12, 2003. We are using the Department of Health's online survey tool, which will be efficient for staff completing the survey, and will save data entry time and money. We have determined that this survey does not work using Netscape; you will need to use Internet Explorer. (To download Internet Explorer 6.0 for free, click here: <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/ie/default.asp>. We will be marketing the survey beginning approximately a week before the start date, and continuing through November and December.

This survey is the first phase of a project to understand the entire public health workforce in Washington. We are beginning with governmental public health workers, but will later expand our work to include other public health partners.

### Message to Staff: "Why Should I Participate?"

Your work is important to the public health system. **Everybody counts!** You are our most valuable resource and we need to know about you. Having the information asked for in the survey will help us talk about the public health system; you bring unique skills to our mission that should not be overlooked. The survey results will also help us point out how fragile the public health system is, so that we can strengthen it over time. The results will be helpful

to everyone who cares about public health and they will be used inside each agency, and at regional and statewide levels.

The survey should only take a few minutes. And the local health department or state Department of Health office with the highest rate of participation – or that reaches 100% first – will be rewarded with a special “thank-you” celebration To take the survey, please go to: <http://www2.doh.wa.gov/phip/survey/everybodycounts/default.htm>  
**Please note:** If you took the pilot version of this survey at the Joint Conference on Health... thank you! Your input was included in this version. However, in order for your information to count, please take this survey -- the "real" one – again.

## **Timeline**

### **September 2003:**

- Planning of overall census and survey process by subcommittee.
- Educating management staff (DOH and LHJs) about the census.

### **October 2003:**

- Pilot test the survey instrument at the Joint Conference on Health in Yakima.
- Review results of pilot and revise accordingly.
- Begin marketing the survey.

### **November –December 2003:**

- Survey is ongoing throughout November and early December.
- Marketing continues throughout November.
- Thank-you/“wrap-up” messages, along with notice of the LHJ or DOH program with the highest participation rate, sent to public health staff.

### **January - February 2004:**

- Celebration event for the winning LHJ or DOH program.

### **March - April 2004:**

- Results are shared statewide and emphasized as celebration of public health workforce during Public Health Week in April.

## **What will happen after the survey?**

We plan to distribute the results by Public Health Week in April 2004, giving us an appropriate time to celebrate. The report will be available to everyone.

## **For more information about this project**

More information – in the form of e-mail messages and posters – will be available in the next couple of weeks. In the meantime, if you have questions, please send them to:

Janice Taylor

[PHEverybodyCounts@doh.wa.gov](mailto:PHEverybodyCounts@doh.wa.gov)

360-236-4086

**PHIP Workforce Development Co-Chairs:** Jack Thompson, Northwest Center for Public Health Practice; Sue Grinnell, Cowlitz County

**Everybody Counts! Sub-Committee:** Jack Thompson, Northwest Center for Public Health Practice; Jane Wright, Kittitas; Madeleine Thompson, Workforce Education and Training Board; Vic Harris, Tacoma-Pierce County; Betty Bekemeier, Turning Point; Marianne Seifert, State Board of Health; James Apa, Seattle-King County; Sandra Ciske, Seattle-King County

**DOH Technical Consultants:** Jill Hanks, Marketing/Distribution; Doug Keck, Steve Macdonald, and Jack Jourden, Survey Development; Dai Le, Danny Francis and Bob Clark, WWW Technical; Susan Shoblom, Pam Lovinger, and Bonnie King, Health Professions Licensing/Credentialing; Kathy Deuel, Human Resources